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# "YES, GOD IS WITH US IN INDIA"



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# **“Yes, God is with Us in India”**

**The Rev. J. J. Lucas, Allahabad, India**

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**T**ELL us the things you have seen and heard which show the hand of God working with you and through you and back of you in the mission work in India. Tell us of the changes of the thirty-six years since you went out to India, changes wrought by the Spirit of God through the preaching of the Gospel and the teaching of the Bible. Most gladly do I respond to this invitation, for as I look back I see God's hand here and there and everywhere, so that I can reply with deepest conviction and reverence: “Yes, God is with us in India,” for only His presence can explain these things.

(1) One of my fellow travelers part of the way on my first voyage to India was the oldest missionary in North India, the venerable and beloved John Newton, one of the founders of the Presbyterian mission in the Punjab. Mr. Newton told me of the opposition he met with in his preaching from the Mohammedans, that they often interrupted and tried to silence him. On one occasion when he was preaching in Lahore a Mohammedan wrought himself into a frenzy of excitement, opposing the message of the Gospel. At last the Spirit brought to memory those words of our Lord: “Bless them that curse you, pray for them which despitefully use you,” and at once Mr. Newton said: “Let us pray,” and began to pray for this man and the people. It seemed as though God had come into that gathering on the streets of Lahore, so silent and subdued became the Mohammedan preacher and people, and there was never after an interruption from

this man. That is what has been going on all over India, here and there and there—the opposition of this and that Mohammedan turned into silence when the Gospel is preached and sometimes into reverent attention, and now and again into loving obedience. In that very city of Lahore to-day the pastor of one of the largest and most influential Presbyterian churches in India is a convert from Mohammedanism, a graduate from the Punjab University, the Rev. Talib ud Din, and one of the Professors in the Forman Christian College, Lahore, is another convert from Mohammedanism, Mr. Siraj ud Din, an elder in the Presbyterian church.

My first year in India was spent in the City of Allahabad and it was no unusual sight in those days to see a Mohammedan preaching on the streets of the city in opposition to the Christian missionary, and this at times grew so violent that the magistrate of Allahabad had to pass an order assigning places two hundred yards distant to the Christian and Mohammedan preachers. That day of bitter opposition has largely passed in Allahabad. A Presbyterian church now stands facing the square where years ago I often stood under a tree preaching the Gospel, amidst a din of voices raised in opposition. I do not say that the opposition of Mohammedans in India has ceased. Far from it, for in many places the ignorant and fanatical Mohammedan is as ready now as of old to silence the Christian preacher and drive him with shame from town and city. But, that not forgotten, it still stands true that in very many places the attitude of the Mohammedan is changed from bitter opposition to quiet recognition that Jesus is indeed the one sinless prophet, of unique birth, now in Heaven, and to come again with great glory. Thus by the preaching and the press, comparing the Gospel and the Koran, we have refreshed the

memory of Mohammedans as to the many things the Koran says in praise of Christ, so that tens of thousands of them have come to look on Jesus with quite different eyes and are now magnifying the things in which they are one with us, and minimizing the things in which we differ. Three years ago I heard a Mohammedan gentleman in a town of the Allahabad district repeat with tears in his eyes that hymn of hymns,

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My chiefest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

This man is not on the rolls of the church in India, but when I talked with him of Christ and heard him say that he never lifted up his heart in prayer without taking the name of Jesus, I felt drawn to him as a brother. And when I recall one and another and another Mohammedan, with whom I have talked of Jesus in recent years, the conviction deepens that the Spirit of God is working in the hearts of the Mohammedans of India, turning them to Him as the prophet whom they have not yet heard and obeyed as they should.

(2) When I went to Allahabad it was the custom of our missionaries to pitch a large tent, open at the sides, on the banks of the Ganges River, near its junction with the Jumna. This is one of the most sacred places in India, hundreds of thousands of Hindus coming every year in the month of Magh (January and February) to bathe at the junction of these rivers. In those days the missionaries had the field all to themselves so far as public preaching was concerned. The Brahmin priest and pundit thought and said: "What can these foreign missionaries accomplish? Let them

preach. They cannot break down the great mountain of Hinduism. As well shake the granite of the Himalayas." And so we preached on year after year, without much opposition from Hindus, certainly no organized opposition. We sold and gave away copies of the Gospel and tracts in



*Junction of the Jumna and Ganges.*

Hindi and Urdu by the tens and hundreds of thousands and these were taken back to many a village home to be read in quiet and pondered over. A Hindu, Ram Bharosa, came from his distant home to this Mela at Allahabad, and when for the first time he heard the preacher speak of Christ as the only true Guru and Savior, all others like a broken boat unable to carry us over the

deep, swift river, he was filled with wrath that any name should be put above that of Ram, the hero of the Ramayana. And so he went back to his home with a Gospel, resolved to compare it with the Ramayana, certain that thus he would be able to show the superiority of Ram. A few years later he came to me with this theory which he had wrought out by comparison of the Ramayana and the Gospels: Ram of the Ramayana is God the Father of the Gospels and Christ is the son of Ram, while we who believe in Ram and Christ are the Holy Spirit of the Gospel. And he was ready to be baptized as a disciple of Jesus. He came before the session of the Church at Allahabad and professed his faith in Christ, his acceptance of the Gospels as the Word of God, and was ready to be baptized. As he held also that the Ramayana is inspired and that Ram is God, we could not baptize him, and the last I saw of him he was an itinerant preacher in North India, proclaiming this mixture of the Ramayana and the Gospel as he understood them, and blaming me for my narrowness in not accepting the Ramayana as well as the Gospels. The mental and spiritual state of my friend, Ram Bharosa, will show you the new thoughts concerning Christ, which are working in the minds and hearts of many Hindus to-day.

I spoke of the missionaries when I first went to India having their tents pitched in the midst of the thousands and tens of thousands of Hindu pilgrims from all parts of India gathered on the banks of the Ganges. At that time the pundits and priests were largely indifferent. Buddhism had swept over India and had been quietly swallowed up by the Brahmins. There was hardly a vestige of Buddhism in North India. Mohammedanism had come with sword and fire, emperor after emperor with

his army trying to stamp out Hinduism, converting some of its finest temples into mosques; and yet after every wave of Moslem fury, Hinduism rose, wounded, but strong and ready for the next assault, and made a greater impression on the monotheism of Islam than the Mohammedan conquerors made on the pantheism of the Brahmins. A spirit of contempt and attitude of indifference, with a feeling of security marked the leaders of Hindu thought thirty-five years ago. Hence, they had no preachers in the field at this great gathering on the Ganges to contradict us or to counteract our influence and turn men away from hearing us. That attitude of indifference and security is largely a thing of the past, and one evidence of it is found at this gathering at Allahabad. As in years past so in January and February of this, the Christian teachers and preachers were preaching under their tents, going in and out among the pilgrims, selling and giving away Gospels and tracts, but the Hindu preachers were there also. They too, under their tents were proclaiming the Bhagavad Gita, with its exaltation of Krishna, as an incarnation, as well as the Supreme Deity to men who, like Arjun, have the open eye to see him. There, too, within a stone's throw of the Christian preachers was the open tent of the Arya Somaj, with its preachers proclaiming that all that is good in the Gospels and far more is to be found in the Vedas. What need, then, of turning to the Gospel or Christ for light when it is to be found in the Vedas? There, too, was the great tent of the Sanatan Dharma Ka Maha Sabha (the great assembly of the eternal religion). Thirty-five years ago at this gathering I could not have heard a Hindu preacher proclaiming against idolatry and against caste, maintaining that these are contrary to the teaching of the



Vedas. But this year I could hear it every day proclaimed by the followers of Swami Dayanand Sarasvati, founder of the Arya Somaj, whom I knew. Could the old missionaries and Indian preachers, who year after year preached at this Mela against idolatry and caste, come back and hear Hindu preachers denouncing these as contrary to the teaching of the Vedas they would say, of a truth, this is a miracle.

Eleven years ago I spent the greater part of my summer vacation in teaching the Gospel of John to a Hindu named Mungal Dev, a man of lovely character and every way attractive personality. Day after day I studied the Gospel of John, with the aid of Godet's Commentary and with a desire to know its meaning, as I had never studied it before. Hours every day for more than a month were spent in this study and teaching. We read together this Gospel, praying over it, and more than once my carpet was wet with the tears of this man as he bowed his head to the floor and poured out his heart in prayer. He would take the Gospel and go out alone into a grove, spending hours in reading and meditation, and I can only say that I gave myself to prayer more than once for him. But the summer passed and he was not ready to be baptized as a disciple of the Lord Jesus. Some months later his wife and daughter, who were with him during the summer, were baptized in our church at Lodiana, led largely to Christ through the loving sympathy of Christian women. But to this day Mungal Dev has not been baptized, and I have seen him only once since that summer, eleven years ago, which we spent together in the study of John. In January of this year as I went to and fro among the hundreds of ascetics and religious leaders in camp on the Mela grounds on the banks of the Ganges, I was attracted by a Hindu seated

on a blanket on the ground, protected from the sun by an umbrella fastened in the ground. His was an attractive face and I readily responded to his call for me to come and take a seat by him. Why was he there? He was associated in a Somaj in the Punjab with my old friend, Mungal Dev, and he was there to make disciples. What did he teach? This, in brief, that love is the greatest thing in the world, and to proclaim this he had come from the Punjab and taken up his abode amidst the pilgrims, suffering much discomfort and yet without a word of complaint. And out of what book learned he this message if not from the Gospel of John? And so the summer was not lost after all; if in any measure it poured into the heart of one man the message which needs to be burned into all our hearts that after all love is the greatest of all and that without it eloquence, knowledge, faith, alms-giving are nothing in the sight of God. My old friends, Ram Bharosa and Mungal Dev, do not represent all India, but they stand for tens of thousands of Hindus who have come to put the Lord Jesus, if not in the highest place yet put no one higher. We may not be satisfied with this, indeed, we cannot be until He is crowned Lord of all, but let us be patient and let us believe that men like these are doing a silent, quiet work of which we hear little, but which is making a new India. It is as yet a valley of dry bones, but there is a movement among them. The words of many preachers have been breathing life into them, and it may be that the breathings of prayer all over India to-day may be the beginning of the breath coming from the four winds, which is to unite all these scattered and secret disciples, forming them into a great army for the service of the Lord.

(3) In the early part of my missionary life and until recent years we were often

discouraged at the few baptisms, two or three during the year from one district and two or three from another, while now and then one of high caste came out with great courage, enduring cruel persecution and suffering the loss of all things for the sake



*Low Caste Hindu Family.*

of Christ. In those days we comforted ourselves with the promises of God. We fell back on the promise, Lo, I am with you. That has been the comfort of some of us many and many a year and it is still the comfort of many. But for five years in the mission of which I am a member, the re-

port of baptisms by the hundreds has been made, and last year in one district of our mission, the Mainpuri, there were a thousand baptisms. So that instead of tens we are baptising hundreds. It is true that most of these, nearly all of them in fact, come from what the Hindu calls the "low caste," the creation of the feet of Brahma, created to be servants and scavengers, unfit to draw water from the same well the Brahmin drinks from, unfit to enter the same school the Brahmin enters, unfit to dwell save on the outskirts of the town and village. It is among these lowly and despised ones we have gone and they have in some districts responded by the hundreds and thousands to the message of hope for them in the Gospel.

The Gospel which found our forefathers wild savages in the forests of Germany, or slaves exposed for sale in the auction marts in Rome and sent missionaries to lift us up to where we are to-day, has begun this uplifting work among the lower class of the Hindu strata. One of them prayed at a conference of Christians last year and as he prayed all present felt that he had access to God, and was pleading in His presence. When he finished the professor of philosophy in the leading college in the Punjab, a man honored by all for his genuine scholarship, and beloved by all as well, voiced the prayer of every one present in a single petition, "Lord, teach me to pray as Thou hast taught Gula." Is it any wonder that at the annual meetings of our mission in India in recent years the song of praise has been going up and we are saying: Yea, the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad?

(4) Recently I told a minister of a Presbyterian church in this country that I was a member of the Presbyterian Mission in North India. The next day he said to

me: "I cannot find your name in the list of ministers in the minutes of the General Assembly." "No," I replied, "you cannot, for I am now a member of the Presbyterian Church in India, which was organized two years ago by the union of seven branches of the Presbyterian Church having missions in India." Long ago it was put into the heart of Dr. John Morrison to propose the forming of a Presbyterian Alliance. For many years Dr. Morrison carried this Alliance in his heart. It was with difficulty he



*A Mohurram Procession.*

could get together half a dozen ministers to constitute a meeting of the Alliance, and years often passed without a meeting. Dr. Morrison long ago fell asleep, comforted by the vision of a united Presbyterian Church in India. Seven years ago the Alliance was revived after a long sleep and two years ago, after careful consideration, seven branches of the Presbyterian family came together in Allahabad, laid aside the old names and adopted a short creed of twelve articles, with a constitution based on Presbyterian principles. Representatives of these churches met in the Jumna Presby-

terian Church, less than two years ago, and organized the first Presbyterian Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in India. That was a day never to be forgotten. The church on the banks of the Jumna River, fronting the City of Allahabad, was filled with the representatives of these seven churches, namely, the Scotch (Established and United Free), the Irish, English, Canadian and American (Reformed Dutch and the Presbyterian Church in America). Over the pulpit was cut, or made of concrete fifty years ago, a large vine, and that day as Scotchmen, Englishmen, Irishmen, Canadians, Americans, Bengalis, Punjabis, Mahratties, Hindustanis and other nationalities faced that beautiful image of the vine, I could not but feel that the builders of the church when they cut that vine in the arch over the pulpit built wiser than they knew; that day the True Vine by its mighty power was drawing together these different branches and making them put forth love to one another, that richest fruit of the spirit. Dr. Mackichan, vice-chancellor of the Bombay University, nominated Dr. Kali Charan Chatterji as moderator, and with one voice he was elected. To see a Kulin Brahmin, now a disciple of Jesus Christ, presiding over this assembly of so many nationalities, all one in Christ, could not but call forth praise. Behold what God hath wrought. When we see these national and ecclesiastical ties, so strong and so sacred, broken in order to unite with the Church in India, and when we see a convert from Hinduism occupying the seat of honor, every way worthy of it, may we not say, of the Church in India, God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.

(5) Nearly thirty-two years ago I attended a meeting of what is now known as the North India Mission. We were a little company of not more than ten men. Re-

ports had come to us from one and another of the open door in the great state of Gwalior, with its three millions of people, not a Protestant preacher among them. We felt some one should be sent, but we were not sure who it should be. After much conference and prayer the ballot was taken and the vote was unanimous in favor of sending Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Warren. He and his wife went willingly and began work. After five years Dr. Warren died,



*Rev. K. C. Chatterji's Itinerating Cart.*

but Mrs. Warren did not leave. She had gained access to the palace of the Maharajah. The present Maharajah was then a child and learned to trust and love her, calling her mother, so that when he came to rule he honored her in many ways. A trooper from his palace, morning and evening, presented himself at her house to ask after her safety and to report to the Maharajah. In times of famine and scarcity funds were intrusted to her by him for the relief of suffering women and children, and when she died he provided a carriage drawn

by four horses to carry her body to the grave, and himself followed as a mourner. He has had a tombstone put up over her grave and requested that mention should be made that it was put up by him as a mark of his personal esteem. A church building Mrs. Warren began was unfinished at her death. The Maharajah asked what it would cost to complete it and when told rupees fifteen hundred, he sent that amount. As my thoughts go back over the thirty-two years and I recall the discussions in that little company of missionaries as to which of our number should go, the prayer before the vote was taken, with its perfect unanimity, and then when I think how this woman, chosen that day to go with her husband, proved the very one to keep open the door of Gwalior to mission effort in the capital of that great state, I cannot but say, Yes, the Lord was in the room that day leading us in a way we little knew then, but all along which we can now trace His hand.

(6) Five years ago we had a Christian college in Allahabad, but it was only on paper and in the hearts of a few missionaries. We wished to remove the girls' school from the Jumna Compound, Allahabad, and give it a home three miles away at Katra and so make over all the Jumna Compound to our boys' school and college. We had not a cent for the removal of the girls' school and not a cent for the buildings needed for the college, nor could the Board in New York help save by giving their sanction to our plans and permission to go ahead when we got the money. Just then Mr. John Wanamaker was led to go for a change to Europe. He had no intention of going on to India when he left his home in Philadelphia. He was led to go on to India, but with no purpose of going to Allahabad. When he reached Calcutta, a friend, look-



ing over his brief itinery in North India saw that he had left out Allahabad and showed how he could give twenty-four hours to that city. From the hour in which Mr. Wanamaker asked us in Allahabad, "What can I do for you, brethren?" we have had a friend and helper, giving us a site and building for our girls' school at a cost of over twenty thousand dollars, giving us a hostel for our students and enlarging the Jumna Compound by adding two bungalows adjoining, as well as sending out two professors for the college, whom he has supported. As I remember how forlorn our situation was five years ago, a college only on paper, and recall all the difficulties with which we were then face to face and how Mr. Wanamaker's coming that day changed the whole situation, putting both the girls' school and college on firm foundations, I cannot but say, It is not in a man to devise his way. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

(7) And the last, best proof that God is with us in India is the moving of His Holy Spirit in so many hearts, in so many churches and in such great power during the last two years. This requires a chapter by itself. There is a spirit of prayer very widespread which has already brought untold blessing in many places and which is but the forerunner of yet greater things. It was when the disciples were with one accord in the upper chamber and had thus waited in expectation that the Spirit came with a power unknown before. It was when Peter was praying on the housetop at Joppa that the new vision came. It was when the Church at Antioch was praying with fasting that the Spirit separated with new power and gave gifts for new service to two of their number. And so whenever there is a spirit of prayer, as at Jerusalem,

as at Joppa and as at Antioch, we may expect new manifestations of the power of the Spirit. That spirit of prayer is now being poured out in India and so we may expect yet greater things. The one great cry of missionaries and Christians in India to-day is this, Revive Thy Church, O Lord, and begin with me. The Apostle tells us in Romans 8 that the whole creation is groaning and longing for deliverance. We have seen how poor India is passing through a time of groaning of spirit, the old religions not satisfying and leaving her to turn here and there for help. The picture I have in my heart is that of a poor Hindu woman who was wounded in the crush of the great crowd at the Mela on the banks of the Ganges in February. She was hurrying with her friends to the river on the morning of the great bathing day when the crush caught her and she was trampled in the dust, separated from her friends and carried to a grass house which had been converted into a hospital. I went that day to see the wounded. As every one came in she looked up wistfully to see whether it was a friend, some one to whom she could turn and trust in this time of sore need. How often as one and another came in that day had she been disappointed, looking for some one and no one coming. That is a picture of poor India, wounded and helpless, looking for some one to bring comfort, even a word from God, which has in it life and healing. To have the privilege of going with a word from the Savior to the many like this poor Hindu woman is ours, and we may hear His voice as Paul did at Troas asking him to come over to his help in Macedonia. The call for help is His. "He that hath ears let him hear."



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